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## Raising livestock does not hurt environment

By Greg Robey

Contrary to suggestions in Derrick Z. Jackson's column, every day is Earth Day for Kentucky beef producers like me -- not only because my livelihood is so dependent on water and soil but because protecting the environment is simply the right thing to do.

Living so close to the land every day, farmers realize we are stewards of this planet, and we're committed to leaving it in better condition for our children and our children's children.

And contrary to the misstated information in the column, we in the United States are significantly ahead of the world in managing livestock production in an environmentally friendly manner.

Production of food animals in the United States contributes less than 3 percent to total greenhouse gas emissions, compared to fossil fuel combustion, which contributes nearly 80 percent of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Another healthy aspect of sustainable beef production involves grazing cattle on U.S. grazing lands, about 85 percent of which is unsuitable for crops.

Running cattle on these lands contributes to the ecosystem by converting forages that humans can't eat into a nutrient-rich food humans can eat.

On April 22, the world celebrated Earth Day. But the Earth is something that the 40,000 beef producers of Kentucky celebrate on our farms every day.

If you need information about beef producers and the environment, go to the Web site [www.BeefFromPastureToPlate.org](http://www.BeefFromPastureToPlate.org) or to [www.kybeef.com](http://www.kybeef.com).

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